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The Power of Faith.

Faith is belief. It may be a mere assent of the mind to a proposition or a firm conviction. When it is an assent of the mind, there is no strength in it; when it is a conviction there is power in it.

The scriptures teach that without faith it is impossible to please God. A mere assent of the mind that there is a God, that his Son was sent into the world to save sinners, and that his Spirit has operated upon men's hearts to write holy truth is not satisfying to God. But where this belief is a conviction God is pleased, because it will lead to action.

Left alone, belief or faith is blind: it may be false or true. A false faith is a power for evil and a true faith is a power for good.

There is power in faith—in conviction. This faith moves the world, and lifts men into the possession of immortal bodies and endless life. Faith is the prime mover in securing to us all the improvements and inventions of modern times. Men become the possessors of convictions that certain results can be attained and their ability and energy are directed in accomplishing the desired work. In this sphere faith moves blindly. It has no law to guide it that it may act in harmony with the Master Mind who created all things and combined the principles that underlie the immense machinery of this universe, that success may be sure. Faith in its wanderings, in the pathway of invention, occasionally falls upon the line that the Master Mind has laid, and a new steam boat, railway engine, telegraph, telephone, or some other marvelous invention is the result. But if the faith exercised by the inventor is not in harmony with the mind of the Inventor of the universe, then his faith is false and its power brings disaster or loss to him..

In spiritual things faith is also a power. Before Moses and Christ, faith, in the realm of divine things, moved blindly as faith now does in the sphere of invention. Enoch fell upon the true line and his faith lifted him bodily into heaven.

Since the time of Christ, there is no longer any occasion for faith moving blindly in spiritual things. By his revelation we are able to guide our faith. "Believe in God, believe also in Me," is the language of Jesus. "The rule of faith" is what we call the Gospel. There is a power of truth in that sentence; all is told in it. It is man's privilege to read it, and therein is directions how to guide his faith that it may be effectual in obtaining salvation.

It must be patent to every mind that there is power in faith. By faith Enoch was translated. Power was required to lift a man bodily into heaven. By faith the walls of Jericho fell. It required power to bring to the earth a wall of solid masonry designed as a barrier against foes who used battering rams and such other instruments as were found effectual in crushing stout walls.

Faith, as a grain of mustard seed, according to the language of Jesus, contained sufficient power to remove a mountain and cast it into the sea. This would require an immense power, yet faith has it.

There is no mystery about faith when viewed from the correct premise although it is powerful. The problem is made easy when it is set forth as the relation between mind and matter. Mind is all powerful. It is the master mind of God that brought the earth into existence. Mind is king. Give man the key to the relation of mind to matter and you give him the key to all mysteries and all powers. Give man this knowledge and he will bring into active life any inanimate object he may look upon. There would then be nothing higher than he and no power greater than his. The unknown would vanish before his sight, and there would be no one greater than he. Life and death would become as common as the principle of eating bread to gain strength. But this knowledge is kept from man, and his faith is a wandering bark upon the mighty sea of creation and mystery is written upon the landing he is unable to make—the relation of mind to matter.

Faith is successful when it is in harmony with the mind of God. When men's minds act in conjunction with that mind, then wonderful results follow. By such harmony the marvelous things have been accomplished in the providence of God, that are known as miracles. Harmonious action with the mind of God, will save us. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the rule of faith; it tells us how to control or direct our faith that we may be saved thereby. By following it our minds act in harmony with the mind of God, and the salvation of the soul is the result. This means that our minds must be subject to the divine mind. Men are saved by doing the will of the Father. Thus our faith becomes the mind of God, and all things are subject to his mind, whether they be the walls of Jericho, Enoch's body, the Red Sea, or the mountains of Gallilee. To be rebellious is destruction and endless death.

Freedom for the Negros.

A book is now in press, in the EVANGELIST office, entitled, "My Northern Travels," by Miss Julia Wood. One of its chapters contains a reference to the Freedmen of the South, and from it we learn that the colored man is not making the best use of the privilege of freedom. Indeed her remarks are rather a sad commentary on the results of freeing the colored man. It is not argument in support of slavery, at all, but shows that the Negro, does not know how to use freedom, and has made it a means of degradation rather than a help to progress and enlightenment. It is made a stumbling block, as some made the freedom afforded by the gospel of Christ in the days of St. Paul.

It appears that men must possess a certain degree of enlightenment to be capable of self-government, and the character of the colored man has not naturally risen to that needed at this stage of the world's progress.

It might be proper to make some allowance on Sister Wood's opinion, because she was raised in the South, and the influence of early education will cause her to cling to the ways of the days gone by, yet her devotion to the cause of man's elevation from the lower to the higher, and her honesty and fairness commend the result of her observation to candid consideration; and judging from this information, it will be some time before the colored man is truly emancipated from the thralldom under which he groans.

With this subject before us, we are led again to the inquiry why God so long witheld the glorious gospel from the people. For nearly or altogether four thousand years the world knew no Christ. It seems that their condition was such that they were not worthy to receive and retain the liberty that there is in Christ Jesus. Their power of living in the spiritual was then too week to be intrusted with such liberties, and God saw proper to rule them in a severer manner.

Law is the most powerful and influential educator there is, when supported by severe penalties. When a command has standing behind it a severe and prolonged penalty, it is a most effective power for good, when its aim is proper. The last is the teacher that will bring into obedience the lower classes of human beings. They are not competent to receive and live up to the rights that belong to the man who is intellectually and spiritually able to utilize freedom to broaden his own happiness and increase his wealth and knowledge.

Freedom for the colored man is what he needs and should have; but it was thrust upon him when he was unfit to receive it. In freedom he has a kind of goods that he knows no use for, and he is more apt to use it to his social and religious mortification, rather than to advance his domestic felicity and moral development. The process should have been more gradual in revolutionizing his relation to the whites. The declaration of his freedom was proper, but the means of education and religious guidance was not furnished him as his needs demanded, and now his liberty is too much a stumbling-stone and a rock of offence. They were redeemed from one slavery, and not being educated properly, they are becoming the ready victims of a new slavery under satan, more dangerous than before.

There is an opening for a great mission work among the freedmen of the south. Education and Christianity alone are able to lift them up to that standard of manhood and womanhood which will make them truly free; and not them alone, but all mankind.

Good for Philadelphia.

Bro. J. C. Cassel, of Philadelphia, Pa., is not a hearer only, but a doer of the word. He pledged his church for $50 for the College, and his check is already on hand. The Ashland brethren admire such deeds, and we will do it in a substantial way. Bro. Cassel will put the Ashland brethren down for $5 to help build a Brethren church in Philadelphia, and draw on us at sight when the work commences.

The Publishing House.

We print the recommendations passed by the Convention relative to the publishing interets of the church on the third page this week. We do this that the churches may know what their privilege is. The recommendations speak for themselves. Under them Bro. J. W. Beer was appointed Editor and Publisher, J. D. McFaden, Assistant Editor, and E. L. Yoder, Edward Mason and A. L. Garber were appointed Directors. The Convention decided to pay $7,500 for the EVANGELIST, and, in as much as the Directors are now connected with the paper in a financial way, a committee was appointed to do the purchasing.

The Secrecy Question.

A correspondent of the *Religious Telescope*, the organ of the United Brethren church, recently advanced this doctrine regarding the attitude of that church on the secrecy question: He said: "The church cannot be cumbered with our rule on secrecy, and have a clear sky and a successful sail." "Our efforts should be to focalize the rays of faith in a body of divinity such as the Bible produces, and make this church a power in the world." "Every church that is progressive must adapt itself to a universal equipment of mankind."

We do not know what the rule of the United Brethren Church is in reference to the Lodge system and we therefore cannot tell whether we would agree on the subject of "cumbering" the church. But the doctrine of focalizing the "rays of faith in a body of divinity," when there is evil to be corrected is unscriptural. A covenant with death or an agreement with hell is not the kind of work that a servant of God should engage in.

The testimony of great men, in and out of the secret society, prove to us that the Christian should remain separate from them. Righteousness should always be maintained and that which is not beneficial should be abandoned.

Among devout men, the lodge system has few advocates, and this question is not so much a question of right or wrong, as by what method it should be dealt with. The enthusiast and extremist advocate the use of the ecclesiastical sword, and regard connection with such associations a capital crime, in divine things. Others are milder in their treatment.

The Dunkard Church has occupied about the correct ground on this question, as we see it. It is well known that it has allowed members to hold connection with secret societies, yet its discipline and doctrine commit the church against them. It has not been intolerable, although its teachings are strongly opposed to the lodge.

Connection with a secret society certainly cannot be regarded as a crime equal to adultery, murder, and like sins. Yet lodge-fellowship cannot enhance any individual's spirituality, when he is united in a fraternal bond with unbelievers and those who scoff at religion.

It is good to belong to a secret society, or it is not good. If it is good, preachers should teach the people to join them. If it is not good to join them, then it is their duty to teach the people so. The work of the minister is to teach the people truth and Christianity, and if the minister does not do this, it is false to its trust.

But on this subject, as upon all others, ministers should be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Unqualified denunciations will not reach the hearts of the taught as readily as the truth firmly taught in a milder manner. The patrons of lodges should be invited to search the scriptures and showed wherein it would be better to be held in fraternal bonds only with the children of God.

The Christian is to forsake all and follow Jesus. God has instituted but three societies on which he has placed his sign of recognition. They are the family, the state and the church. Anything in the form of a society not auxiliary thereto, is either purely worldly, or antagonistic to true religion.

A Great Benefit.

It is with some pride that we allude to the fact that the Convention was of great benefit to the College and church here. No such good results would have followed the holding of a convention at any other point. The promise of the church to restore the College has lifted it up wonderfully in the estimation of the people here. Ashland nor the Brethren church are the worse off because the convention was held here.

Creed, Discipline and Minutes.

Bro. M. J. R., of Perrysville, Ohio, asks the difference between a church discipline and the Minutes of our Annual Meeting. There are three words that are often misunderstood and improperly used. They are *creed, discipline*, and *Minutes*, as applied to a church.

The word *creed*. comes from the Latin *credo*, I believe, and, as an ecclesiastical term, means a systematic statement of the religious faith held by a person or a body of believers.

The word *discipline*, as a religious term, refers to a system of rules adopted for the government of a church, as, for example, "The Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

The word *Minutes*, as applied to the record of our Annual Meeting transactions, is a brief statement of the business transacted at those annual gatherings of the delegates of our church, and consists mainly of answers to queries, advice to churches, resolutions, decisions against crime, and the manner of treatment, etc., and partakes of the nature of a record of judicial proceedings, just like the Minutes of our ordinary church councils; hence cannot be regarded either as a creed or discipline.

This article is found in a late number of the *Gospel Messenger*, and it is very true except the last phrase. The minutes of Annual Meeting is a discipline in every sense of the word. They